

The Best Book on Comparative Religion

---By Dr.Zakir Naik.

Religions of the world can be broadly categorized into Semitic religions and non-Semitic religions. Non-Semitic religions can be divided into Aryan religions and non-Aryan religions.

Semitic religions

Semitic religions are religions that originated among the Semites. According to the Bible, Prophet Noah (pbuh) had a son called Shem.

The descendents of Shem are known as Semites. Therefore, Semitic religions are the religions that originated among the Jews, Arabs, Assyrians, Phoenicians, etc. Major Semitic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. All these religions are Prophetic religions that believe in Divine Guidance sent through prophets of God.

Non-Semitic religions

The non-Semitic religions are further subdivided into Aryan and non-Aryan religions:

Aryan Religions

Aryan religions are the religions that originated among the Aryans, a powerful group of Indo-European speaking people that spread through Iran and Northern India in the first half of the second Millennium BC (2000 to 1500 BC).

The Aryan Religions are further subdivided into *Vedic* and non-*Vedic* religions.

The *Vedic* Religion is given the misnomer of Hinduism or Brahmanism. The non-*Vedic* Religions are Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc.

Almost all Aryan religions are non-Prophetic religions.

Zoroastrianism is an Aryan, non-Vedic religion, which is not associated with Hinduism. It claims to be a prophetic religion.

Non-Aryan Religions

The non-Aryan religions have diverse origins. Confucianism and Taoism are of Chinese origin while Shintoism is of Japanese origin.

Many of these non-Aryan religions do not have a concept of God. They are better referred to as ethical systems rather than as religions.

Concept of God in Christianity

Introduction

Position of Jesus in Islam

Concept of God in Christianity

Prophet Muhammad in Bible (OT & NT)

Similarities Between Christianity and Islam

Introduction

Christianity is a Semitic religion, which claims to have nearly 1.2 billion adherents all over the world. Christianity owes its name to Jesus Christ (peace be on him). The Holy Bible is the sacred scripture of the Christians:

1. The Bible is divided into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is the Holy Scripture of the Jews and contains records of all the prophets of the Jews that came before Jesus (pbuh).

The New Testament contains records of the life of Jesus (pbuh).

2. The complete Bible, i.e. the Old Testament and the New Testament put together, contains 73 books. However, the Protestant Bible i.e. the King James Version, contains only 66 books as they consider 7 books of the Old Testament to be apocrypha, i.e. of doubtful authority.

Therefore the Old Testament of the Catholics, contains 46 books and that of the Protestants, 39 books. However the New Testament of both these sects contains 27 books.

Position of Jesus in Islam

1. Islam is the only non-Christian faith, which makes it an article of faith to believe in Jesus (pbuh). No Muslim is a Muslim if he does not believe in Jesus (pbuh).
2. We believe that he was one of the mightiest Messengers of Allah (swt).
3. We believe that he was born miraculously, without any male intervention, which many modern day Christians do not believe.
4. We believe he was the Messiah translated Christ (pbuh).
5. We believe that he gave life to the dead with God's permission.
6. We believe that he healed those born blind, and the lepers with God's permission.

Concept of God in Christianity

New Testament

1. Jesus Christ Never Claimed Divinity

One may ask, if both Muslims and Christians love and respect Jesus (pbuh), where exactly is the parting of ways? The major difference between Islam and Christianity is the Christians' insistence on the supposed divinity of Christ (pbuh). A study of the Christian scriptures reveals that Jesus (pbuh) never claimed divinity. In fact there is not a single unequivocal statement in the entire Bible where Jesus (pbuh) himself says, "I am God" or where he says, "worship me". In fact the Bible contains statements attributed to Jesus (pbuh) in which he preached quite the contrary. The following statements in the Bible are attributed to Jesus Christ:

- a. **"My Father is greater than I."** [*The Bible, John 14:28*]
- b. **"My Father is greater than all."** [*The Bible, John 10:29*]
- c. **"...I cast out devils by the Spirit of God...."** [*The Bible, Mathew 12:28*]
- d. **"...I with the finger of God cast out devils...."** [*The Bible, Luke 11:20*]
- e. **"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."** [*The Bible, John 5:30*]

2. The Mission of Jesus Christ (pbuh) – to Fulfill the Law

Jesus (pbuh) never claimed divinity for himself. He clearly announced the nature of his mission. Jesus (pbuh) was sent by God to confirm the previous Judaic law. This is clearly evident in the following statements attributed to Jesus (pbuh) in the Gospel of Mathew:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." [*The Bible, Mathew 5:17-20*]

3. God Sent Jesus' (pbuh)

The Bible mentions the prophetic nature of Jesus (pbuh) mission in the following verses:

- a. **"... and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."** [*The Bible, John 14:24*]

- b. **"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent."** [The Bible, John 17:3]

4. Jesus Refuted even the Remotest Suggestion of his Divinity

Consider the following incident mentioned in the Bible:

"And behold, one came and said unto him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?'

And he said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' "

[The Bible, Mathew 19:16-17]

Jesus (pbuh) did not say that to have the eternal life of paradise, man should believe in him as Almighty God or worship him as God, or believe that Jesus (pbuh) would die for his sins. On the contrary he said that the path to salvation was through keeping the commandments. It is indeed striking to note the difference between the words of Jesus Christ (pbuh) and the Christian dogma of salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus (pbuh).

5. Jesus (pbuh) of Nazareth – a Man Approved of God

The following statement from the Bible supports the Islamic belief that Jesus (pbuh) was a prophet of God.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." [The Bible, Acts 2:22]

6. The First Commandment is that God is One

The Bible does not support the Christian belief in trinity at all. One of the scribes once asked Jesus (pbuh) as to which was the first commandment of all, to which Jesus (pbuh) merely repeated what Moses (pbuh) had said earlier:

"Shama Israelu Adonai Ila Hayno Adonai Ikhad."

This is a Hebrew quotation, which means:

"Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord." [The Bible, Mark 12:29]

It is striking that the basic teachings of the Church such as Trinity and vicarious atonement find no mention in the Bible. In fact, various verses of the Bible point to Jesus' (pbuh) actual mission, which was to fulfill the law revealed to Prophet Moses (pbuh). Indeed Jesus (pbuh) rejected any suggestions that attributed divinity to him, and explained his miracles as the power of the One True God.

Jesus (pbuh) thus reiterated the message of monotheism that was given by all earlier prophets of Almighty God.

NOTE: All quotations of the Bible are taken from the King James Version.

Old Testament

1. God is One

The following verse from the book of Deuteronomy contains an exhortation from Moses (pbuh):

"Shama Israelu Adonai Ila Hayno Adna Ikhad".

It is a Hebrew quotation which means:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord"

[The Bible, Deuteronomy 6:4]

2. Oneness of God in the Book of Isaiah

The following verses are from the Book of Isaiah:

- a. **"I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour."**
[The Bible, Isaiah 43:11]
- b. **"I am Lord, and there is none else, there is no God besides me."**
[The Bible, Isaiah 45:5]
- c. **"I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me."**
[The Bible, Isaiah 46:9]

3. Old Testament condemns idol worship

- a. Old Testament condemns idol worship in the following verses:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:"

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

[The Bible, Exodus 20:3-5]

- b. A similar message is repeated in the book of Deuteronomy:

"Thou shalt have none other gods before me."

"Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that in the earth beneath, or that is in the water beneath the earth."

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."

[The Bible, Deuteronomy 5:7-9]

required for concentration while worshipping. After the mind reaches higher consciousness, the idol is not required for concentration.

1. Muslims have reached the higher level of consciousness

Muslims have reached the higher level of consciousness. If an idol is required for concentration only in the initial stages and not later on when the mind reaches higher consciousness then I would like to say the Muslims have already reached the state of higher consciousness because when we worship Allah (swt) we do not require any idol or statue.

2. Child asks why does it thunder?

When I was discussing with a Swami in IRF. He said that when our child asks us, "Why does the sky thunder?", we reply that "aaee ma chakki pees rahi hai", the grandmother is grinding flour in the heaven; because he is too young to understand. Similarly in the initial stages people require an idol for concentration.

In Islam we don't believe in telling a lie, even if it's a white lie. I will never give such a wrong answer to my child because later on when he goes to school and learns that the thundering sound after lightning is due to the expansion of rapidly heated air, he will either think that the teacher is lying or later on when he understands the fact he will conclude that the father is a liar. If you feel that the child may not understand certain difficult things you should simplify the answer rather than give a wrong fictitious reply. If you, yourself do not know the answer, you should have the guts to be truthful and say 'I don't know'. But many children nowadays will not be satisfied with this answer. If this answer was given to my son, he would say "Abba (father), why don't you know?" This will compel you to do your homework and thus educate yourself as well as your child.

3. Those in standard one require idol for concentration – (2 + 2 = 4 will remain same in standard one and ten)

Some pundits while trying to convince me regarding idol worship said that in standard one the student is initially taught to worship God by concentrating with the help of an idol but later on when he graduates he no longer requires the idol to concentrate while worshipping the God.

A very important fact to be noted is that only if the fundamentals of any particular subject is strong, then only will he be able to excel in future for e.g. A teacher of mathematics in standard one teaches the students that $2 + 2 = 4$ irrespective whether the student passes school or does graduation or does a Ph. D. in mathematics, the basics of $2 + 2 = 4$ will yet remain the same, it will not change to 5 or 6. In higher standards the student, besides addition may learn about Algebra, Trigonometry, Logarithm, etc. but the fundamental of addition will yet remain the same. If the teacher in standard one itself teaches the fundamentals wrong, how can you expect the student to excel in future?

It is the fundamental principal of the Vedas regarding the concept of God that He has got no image, so how can the Scholars even after knowing this fact keep silent at the wrong practice being done by people.

Will you tell your son who is in standard one that 2 plus 2 is not equal to 4 but 5 or 6 and only confirm the truth after he passes school? Never. In fact if he makes a mistake you will correct him and say it is 4 and not wait till he graduates; and if you don't correct him initially you will ruin his future.

Question 02

Water is called by different names in different languages: in English as water, in Hindi as paani, in Tamil as tanni. Similarly if God is called either Allah, Ram or Jesus, is it not one and the same?

1. To Allah belongs the Most Beautiful Names

The Glorious Qur'an says in Surah Isra chapter 17 verse 110

"Say: 'Call upon Allah, or call upon Rahman: by whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names.'"

[Al-Qur'an 17:110]

You can call Allah by any name, but it should be a beautiful name, should not conjure up a mental picture, and should have qualities that only Allah possesses.

2. Water can be called by different names in different languages but something else besides water cannot be called water in another language.

You can call water by various names in different languages, like water in English, paani in Hindi, tanni in Tamil, mai in Arabic, apah in Sanskrit, jal in Shudh Hindi, jal or paani in Gujrati, pandi in Marathi, neer in Kannad, neeru in Telugu, vellam in Malayalam, etc. If a person tells me that his friend has advised that everyday early in the morning he should have one glass of paani, but he is unable to drink it because when he drinks it, he feels like vomiting. On enquiry he says that the paani stinks and it is yellowish in colour. Later I realise that what he is referring to as paani is not water but urine. Thus you can call water by different names having the same meaning but you cannot call other things as water or paani.

People may think that the example is not realistic and I agree with them because even an ignorant person knows the difference between water and urine. He will have to be a fool to call urine 'water'. Similarly when any person who knows the correct concept of God, sees people worshipping false gods, he naturally wonders how a person cannot differentiate between a true God and false gods.

3. Purity of Gold is not verified by calling it by different names in different languages but rubbing it against a Touchstone.

In the same way, gold can be called sona in Hindi, gold in English, dhahaba in Arabic. In spite of knowing all these different names for gold, if a person wants to sell you his gold jewellery and says this is 24 carat pure sona, you will not blindly believe, without verifying it with a goldsmith. The goldsmith confirms whether it is gold or not with the help of a touchstone. The yellow glittering jewellery may not be gold, because all that glitters is not gold.

4. Surah Ikhlas is the Touchstone of Theology.

Similarly, any person or candidate who is called God cannot be accepted as the true God without verifying him with the touchstone. The touchstone of theology, that is study of God, is Surah Ikhlas chapter 112 of the Holy Qur'an which says:

"Say, 'He is Allah, The One and Only; Allah, The Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not Nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him.'"

[Al-Qur'an 112:1-4]

Question 03

Hinduism is the oldest of all the religions and thus the, most pure, authentic and best of all the religions of the world.

1. Islam is the oldest religion

Hinduism is not the oldest of all the religions. It is Islam which is the first and the oldest of all religions. People have a misconception that Islam is 1400 years old and that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the founder of this religion. Islam existed since time immemorial, ever since man first set foot on this earth. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was not the founder of Islam. He was the last and final Messenger of Almighty God.

2. The oldest religion need not be the purest and the most authentic religion

A religion cannot be claimed to be most pure and authentic, only on the criterion that it is the oldest. It is similar to a person saying that the water he has kept in an open glass, in his house, outside the refrigerator, for three months is purer than the water which has just been collected in a clean glass, immediately after it has been purified.

3. The latest religion need not be the purest and the most authentic religion

On the other hand a religion cannot be claimed to be the purest or authentic, only on the criterion that the religion is new or the latest. A bottle of distilled water which is sealed, packed and kept in the refrigerator for three months is much purer than a bottle of water freshly collected from the sea.

4. For religion to be pure and authentic, it should not have interpolations, changes and revisions in its scriptures revealed from God

For any religion to be pure and authentic, its scriptures should not contain any interpolation, addition, deletion or revision. Moreover the religion's source of inspiration and direction should be Almighty God. The Qur'an is the only religious scripture on the face of the earth which has been maintained in its original form. All the other religious scriptures, of all the other religions have interpolations, additions, deletions or revisions. The Qur'an has been in the memory of a multitude of people, intact in its original form ever since its revelation, and now there are hundreds of thousands of people who have preserved it in their memory. Moreover, if you compare the copies made by Caliph Uthman from the original Qur'an which is yet present in the museum in Tashkent and in Koptaki museum in Turkey, they are the same as the ones we possess today.

Allah (swt) promises in the Qur'an, in Surah Al Hijr, chapter 15 verse 9

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)."

5. The oldest religion need not be best religion

A religion cannot be claimed to be the best religion only on the criterion that it is the oldest. It is similar to a person saying, that my 19th century car is better than a Toyota car manufactured in

1998, because it is older. He would be considered to be a fool to say that his 19th century car which required a rod to be turned in circles to start it, is better than a key-start 1998 Toyota car, just because it is older.

6. The latest religion need not be the best religion

On the other hand a religion cannot be called as the best religion only on the criterion that the religion is new or that it came later. It is similar to a person who says that my 800 cc Suzuki car manufactured in 1999 is better than a 5000 cc Mercedes 500 SEL manufactured in 1997. To judge which car is better, a person should compare the specifications of the car e.g. the power of the car, safety measures, the capacity of the cylinders, the pickup, the speed, the comfort, etc. 5000 cc Mercedes, 500 SEL car manufactured in 1997, is far superior and better than a 800 cc Suzuki (Maruti Suzuki 800) manufactured in 1999.

7. A religion is best, if it has the solutions to the problems of mankind

For a religion to be considered the best, it should have the solution to all the problems of mankind. It should be the religion of truth, and should be applicable to all ages. Islam is the only religion which has the solution to all the problems of mankind. e.g. the problem of alcoholism, surplus women, rape and molestation, robbery, racism, casteism, etc.

Islam is the religion of truth, and its laws and solutions are applicable to all the ages. The Qur'an is the only religious book on the face of the earth, which has maintained its purity and authenticity proving itself to be the word of God in all the ages. i.e. previously, when it was the age of miracles, literature and poetry and in present times when it is the age of science and technology. Moreover, Islam is not a man-made religion, but a religion revealed and inspired by Almighty God. It is the only religion acceptable in His Sight.

Question 04

"Allah" is the most appropriate name for God in the Qur'an. Is this name "Allah" mentioned in other religious scriptures besides the Qur'an?

Almost all the major religious scriptures of the world contain the word "Allah" as one of the names of God.

a. Elohim El, Elah, Alah

In the Bible, God is very often referred to as 'Elohim' in the Hebrew language. The 'im' in the ending is a plural of honour and God is referred to as 'El' or 'Elah' in the English Bible with commentary, edited by reverend C. I. Scofield. 'Elah' is alternatively spelled as 'Alah'. The difference in spelling is only of a single 'L'. Muslims spell Allah as 'Allah' while the Reverend has spelled it as Alah and they pronounce it as 'Elah'. Muslims pronounce it as Allah. Hebrew and Arabic are sister languages therefore we say it should be pronounced as 'Allah' and not as 'Elah'.

When I was in school, I was taught 'D, O' is do, 'T, O' is to. What is 'G, O' It is 'go' and not 'gu'. 'N, U, T' is nut, 'C, U, T' cut; 'B, U, T' is but, what is 'P, U, T'? Not 'pat' but it is 'put'. If you ask

"Why?" The answer is "It is their language". If I have to pass I have to say 'P, U, T' is 'put' and not 'pat'. Similarly the right pronunciation for A, L, L, A, H, is Allah.

b. Jesus (pbuh) cried out Allah Allah when he was put on the cross

It is mentioned in the New Testament in the Gospel of Mathew, chapter 27 verse 46 as well as Gospel of Mark, chapter 15 verse 34 when Jesus (pbuh) was put on the cross.

Jesus cried with a loud voice saying "E'-Li, E'-Li la'-ma sa-bach'-tha-ni?" that is to say, 'My God, My God why hast Thou Forsaken Me?' Does this sound like Jehovah! Jehovah! why has thou forsaken me? Does it sound like Abba Abba? The answer is 'No'. Hebrew and Arabic are sister languages and if you translate "E'-Li, E'-Li la'-ma sa-bach'-tha-ni" into Arabic it is 'Allah Allah lama tarak tani' does it sound similar?

This statement of Jesus (pbuh), "E'-Li, E'-Li la'-ma sa-bach'-tha-ni" is preserved in its original Hebrew in each and every of its translation which is available in more than 2000 different languages of the world and in each and every of them, "Allah" is present.

2. "Allah" in Sikhism

One of the names by which Gurunanak Sahib referred to God is "Allah".

3a. "Allah" in Rigveda Book 2 Hymn I verse II

Even in the Rigveda which is the most sacred scripture of the Hindus, one of the attributes given to God Almighty in Book no 2 Hymn no I verse II, is 'Ila' which if pronounced properly is the same as Allah.

3b. Allo Upanishad:

Amongst the various Upanishads one of the Upanishad is named as 'Allo' Upanishad in which God is referred to as "Allah" several times.

Question 05

Why do Muslims bury dead bodies instead of cremating them, i.e. burning them?

1. Components of human body present in the soil

Elements that are present in the human body are present in lesser or greater quantity in the soil. Hence it is more scientific to bury a dead body, as it easily gets decomposed and mixed in the soil.

2. No Pollution

Cremating (burning) the dead body leads to pollution of the atmosphere which is detrimental to health and harmful for the environment. There is no such pollution caused by burying a dead body.

3. Surrounding land becomes fertile

To cremate a dead body several trees have to be chopped, which reduces the greenery and harms the environment and the ecology. When dead bodies are buried, besides the trees being saved, the surrounding land becomes fertile and it improves the environment.

4. Economical

It is expensive to cremate a dead body when tons of wood have to be burned. Annually there is a loss of crores of rupees, only because dead bodies are cremated in India. Burying dead bodies is very cheap. It hardly costs any money.

5. Same land can be utilised for burying another body

The wood used for cremating a dead body cannot be reutilised for cremating another dead body since it gets converted to ashes. The land used for burying a dead body can be reutilised for burying another body after a few years since the human body gets decomposed and mixed in the soil.

Question 06

Why do the Muslim married women not put bindi or tika on the forehead and wear Mangalsutra, like Hindu married women? Why do the Muslim married women not put bindi or tika on the forehead and wear Mangalsutra, like Hindu married women?

1. Bindi or tika

Bindi is derived from the sanskrit word bindu, which means a 'dot'. It is usually a red dot made with vermilion powder and is worn by the Hindu women between their eyebrows on their forehead.

Bindi is considered a symbol of 'Parvati' and signifies female energy which is believed by Hindus to protect women and their husbands. It is traditionally a symbol of marriage and is worn by the Hindu married women. It is also called as tika.

2. Bindi has become a fashion

Nowadays, wearing bindi has become a fashion and is even worn by unmarried girls and women. The shape of the bindi is no longer restricted to a dot and is available in various shapes, including oval, star, heart shaped, etc. It is even available in different bright colours like blue, green, yellow, orange, etc. The material of the bindi is no longer restricted to vermilion powder, but is made of coloured felt and other material. It is also available in a variety of designs in combination with coloured glass, glitter, etc.

3. Mangalsutra

Mangalsutra means a thread of good-will. It is a necklace worn specially by Hindu married women as a symbol of their marriage. It consists of two strings of black beads with a pendant usually of gold. The black beads are believed to act as a protection against evil. It is believed to protect the women's marriage and the life of her husband. In southern India, mangalsutra is called tali, which is a small gold ornament string on a cotton cord or a gold chain.

Hindu Married women are never supposed to remove their mangalsutra. It is only cut off when a Hindu lady becomes a widow.

4. Allah Is the Protector

The Arabic word 'Akbar' means 'great'. When we say 'Allahu Akbar' in the Adhaan we proclaim that 'Allah is Great' or 'Allah is the Greatest' and we call people to worship the one and only Allah who is the Greatest.

Question 08

Are Ram and Krishna prophets of God?

If according to Islam, messengers or prophets were sent to each and every nation of the world, then which prophet was sent to India? Can we consider Ram and Krishna to be messengers of God?

1. Prophets sent to every nation

a. The Glorious Qur'an mentions in Surah Fatir, chapter 35 verse 24

"... And there never was a people, without a warner having lived among them (in the past)."
[Al-Qur'an 35:24]

b. A similar message is repeated in Surah Rad, chapter 13 verse 7

"... and to every people a guide."
[Al-Qur'an 13:7]

2. Stories only of some prophets narrated in the Qur'an

a. Allah (swt) says in Surah Nisa, chapter 4 verse 164

"Of some messengers We have already told thee the story; of others we have not."
[Al-Qur'an 4:164]

b. A similar message is repeated in Surah Ghafir chapter 40 verse 78

"We did aforetime send messengers before thee: of them there are some whose story We have related to thee, and some whose story We have not related to thee. . ."
[Al-Qur'an 40:78]

3. 25 Prophets of God are mentioned by name in the Qur'an

By name, only 25 Prophets of God are mentioned in the Qur'an e.g. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammed (pbuh)

4. More than 1,24,000 prophets of God

According to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), there were more than 1,24,000 prophets sent to this world.

5. All previous prophets sent only for their people

All the prophets that came before Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) were only sent for their own people

and were to be followed only for a particular period of time.

Surah Ali Imran, chapter 3 verse 49

"And (appoint him) a messenger to the Children of Israel, . . ."
[Al-Qur'an 3:49]

6. Muhammad (pbuh), the last messenger of God

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the last and final messenger of Almighty God. It is mentioned in

Surah Ahzab, chapter 33 verse 40

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things."
[Al-Qur'an 33:40]

7. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), sent for whole Humankind

Since Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the last and final messenger, he was not sent only for the Muslims or the Arabs, but he was sent for the whole of humankind.

a. It is mentioned in

Surah Anbiya, chapter 21 verse 107

"We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures."
[Al-Qur'an 21:107]

b. A similar message is repeated in

Surah Saba, chapter 34 verse 28

"We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not."
[Al-Qur'an 34:28]

c. It is mentioned in

Sahih Bukhari, volume 1, Book of Salaah, chapter 56 hadith no. 429

Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah: Allah's Messenger said,

"Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to all mankind."

8. Which prophet was sent to India?

Regarding the question of which prophet of God was sent to India, and can we consider Ram or Krishna to be prophets of God, there is no text in the Qur'an or Sahih Hadith mentioning the name of the prophet that was sent to India. Since the names of Ram and Krishna are nowhere to be found in the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith, one cannot say for sure whether they were prophets of God or not. Some Muslims, especially certain Muslim politicians who try to appease the Hindus, say Ram Alai-his-salaam, i.e. Ram, may peace be on him. This is totally wrong, since there is no authentic proof from the Qur'an and Sahih Hadith that he was a prophet of God. However, a person may say that perhaps they may have been the prophets of God.

9. Even if Ram and Krishna were prophets, today we have to follow the last Prophet of God i.e. Muhammad (pbuh)

Even if Ram and Krishna were prophets of God, they were only meant for people of that time and were to be followed only for that particular period of time. Today, all the human beings throughout the world, including India should only follow the last and final prophet and Messenger of God – prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Question 9

Are the Vedas a revelation of God?

If Allah has sent His books and revelations in every period, then which revelation was sent to India? Can we consider the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures to be the word of God?

1. Revelation sent in every period

The Glorious Qur'an mentions in Surah Rad, chapter 13 verse 38

"For each period is a book (revealed)." [Al-Qur'an 13:38]

2. Four revelations of God mentioned by name in Qur'an

By name, only four revelations of God are mentioned in the Qur'an i.e. Torah, Zaboor, Injeel and the Qur'an

Torah is the revelation which was given to Moses (pbuh)

Zaboor is the revelation which was given to David (pbuh)

Injeel is the revelation which was given to Jesus (pbuh)

and Qur'an is the last and final revelation which was given to the last and final Messenger Muhammad (pbuh).

3. All the previous revelations sent only for their people

All the revelations that came before Qur'an were only sent for their own people and were to be followed only for a particular time period.

4. The Qur'an sent for whole humankind

Since the Qur'an is the last and final revelation, it was not sent only for the Muslims or the Arabs but it was sent for the whole of humankind. It is mentioned in:

a. Surah Ibrahim, chapter 14 verse 1

"Alif Lam Ra. A book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light . . ."
[Al-Qur'an 14:1]

b. A similar message is repeated in Surah Ibrahim chapter 14 verse 52

Prophet Muhammad in Jews' Scripture

Prophet Muhammad in Jews' Scripture

→ Book of Deuteronomy

→ Book of Isaiah

Book of Deuteronomy

1. God Almighty speaks to Moses in Book of Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 18:

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

2. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is like Moses (pbuh):

- i. Both had a father and a mother.
- ii. Both were married and had children.
- iii. Both were accepted as Prophets by their people in their lifetime.
- iv. Both besides being Prophets were also kings i.e. they could inflict capital punishment.
- v. Both brought new laws and new regulations for their people.
- vi. Both died a natural death.

3. Muhammad (pbuh) is from among the brethren of Moses (pbuh). Arabs are brethren of Jews. Abraham (pbuh) had two sons: Ishmail and Isaac. The Arabs are the descendants of Ishmail (pbuh) and the Jews are the descendants of Isaac (pbuh).

4. Words in the mouth:

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was unlettered and whatever revelations he received from God Almighty he repeated it verbatim. Deuteronomy (18:18):

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."

Book of Isaiah

It is mentioned in the book of Isaiah chapter 29 verse 12:

"And the book is delivered to him that is not learned saying, 'Read this, I pray thee'; and he saith, 'I am not learned'.

"When Archangel Gabriel commanded Muhammad (pbuh) by saying 'Iqra', he replied "I am not learned".

All the prophecies mentioned in the Old Testament regarding Muhammad (pbuh) besides applying to the Jews also hold good for the Christians (H Q. 61:6).

4. He dies at night-time.
5. He looks exceedingly bright before his death.
6. After his death a Buddha ceases to exist on earth.

1. *Muhammad (pbuh) attained supreme insight and Prophethood at night-time.*

According to Surah Dukhan: "By the books that makes thing clear – We sent it down during a blessed night." [Al-Qur'an 44:2-3]

According to Surah Al-Qadar: "We have indeed revealed this (message) in the night of power." [Al-Qur'an 97:1]

2. *Muhammad (pbuh) instantly felt his understanding illumined with celestial light.*
3. *Muhammad (pbuh) died a natural death.*
4. *According to Ayesha (r.a.), Muhammad (pbuh) expired at night-time. When he was dying there was no oil in the lamp and his wife Ayesha (r.a.) had to borrow oil for the lamp.*
5. *According to Anas (r.a.), Muhammad (pbuh) looked exceedingly bright in the night of his death.*
6. *After the burial of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) he was never seen again in his bodily form on this earth.*

Buddhas are only Preachers

According to Dhammapada, Sacred Books of East vol 10 pg. 67:

"The *Jathagatas* (Buddhas) are only Preachers."

The Qur'an says in Surah Ghashiya:

"Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs."

[Al-Qur'an 88:21-22]

Identification of *Maitreya* by *Buddha*

According to *Dhammapada, Mattaya Sutta*, 151:

"The promised one will be:

1. Compassionate for the whole creation

2. A messenger of peace, a peace-maker
3. The most successful in the world

The Maitreya as a Preacher of morals will be:

1. Truthful
2. Self-respecting
3. Gentle and noble
4. Not proud
5. As a king to creatures
6. An example to others in deeds and in words".

Prophet Muhammad in Parsis' Scripture

Prophet Muhammad in Parsis' Scripture

→Prophet Muhammad in Zend Avesta

→Sanctity of Prophet's Companions

→Prophet Muhammad in Dasatir

→Muhammad will be the Last Prophet

Prophet Muhammad in Zend Avesta

It is mentioned in *Zend Avesta Farvardin Yasht* chapter 28 verse 129 (Sacred Books of the East, volume 23, *Zend Avesta* Part II pg. 220):

"Whose name will be the Victorious, *Soeshyant* and whose name will be *Astvat-ereta*. He will be *Soeshyant* (The Beneficent one) because he will benefit the whole bodily world. He will be *Astvat-ereta* (he who makes the people, bodily creatures rise up) because as a bodily creature and as a living being he will stand against the destruction of the bodily (being) creatures to withstand the drug of the two footed brood, to withstand the evil done by the faithful (idolaters and the like and the errors of the Mazdaynians)".

This Prophecy applies to no other person more perfectly than it does to Muhammad (pbuh):

1. The Prophet was not only victorious at Fatah Makkah but was also merciful when he let go the blood thirsty opponents by saying:

"There shall be no reproof against you this day".
2. *Soeshyant* means the 'praised one' (refer Haisting's Encyclopedia), which translated in Arabic means Muhammad (pbuh).
3. *Astvat-ereta* is derived from the root word *Astu* which in Sanskrit as well as in *Zend* means 'to praise'. The infinitive *Sitaudan* in present day Persian means praising. It can also be derived from the Persian root word *istadan* which would mean 'one who makes a thing rise up'. Therefore *Astvat-ereta* means the one who praised, which is the exact translation of the Arabic word '*Ahmed*' which is another name for Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Prophecy clearly mentions both the names of the Prophet i.e. Muhammad (pbuh) and Ahmed (pbuh).

4. The Prophecy further says that he will benefit the whole bodily world and the Qur'an testifies this in Surah Al-Anbiya chapter 21 verse 107:

"We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures." [Al-Qur'an 21:107]

Sanctity of Prophet's Companions

In Zend Avesta Zamyad Yasht chapter 16 verse 95 (Sacred Books of the East, volume 23 Zend Avesta Part II pg. 308):

"And there shall his friends come forward, the friends of *Astvat-ereta*, who are fiend-smitting, well thinking, well-speaking, well-doing, following the good law and whose tongues have never uttered a word of falsehood."

1. Here too Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned by name as *Astvat-ereta*.
2. There is also a mention of the Prophet's friends as companions who will be fighting the evil; pious, holy men having good moral values and always speaking the truth. This is a clear reference to the *Sahabas* – the prophet's companions.

Prophet Muhammad in Dasatir

The sum and substance of the prophecy mentioned in Dasatir is, that when the Zoroastrian people will forsake their religion and will become dissolute, a man will rise in Arabia, whose followers will conquer Persian and subjugate the arrogant Persians. Instead of worshipping fire in their own temples, they will turn their faces in prayer towards *Kaaba* of Abraham (pbuh) which will be cleared of all idols. They (the followers of the Arabian Prophet), will be a mercy unto the world. They will become masters of Persia, *Madain*, *Tus*, *Balkh*, the sacred places of the Zoroastrians and the neighbouring territories. Their Prophet will be an eloquent man telling miraculous things.

This Prophecy relates to no other person but to Muhammad (pbuh)

Muhammad will be the Last Prophet

It is mentioned in Bundahish chapter 30 verses 6 to 27 that *Soeshyant* will be the last Prophet implying that Muhammad (pbuh) will be the last Prophet. The Qur'an testifies this in Surah Ahzab.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things." [Al-Qur'an 33:40]

Concept of God in Islam

Introduction

Islam is a Semitic religion, which has over one billion adherents all over the world. Islam means "submission to the will of God". Muslims accept the Qur'an, as the word of God revealed to His last and final prophet, Mohammed (peace be upon him). Islam states that Allah sent messengers and prophets throughout the ages with the message of Oneness of God, and accountability in the Hereafter. Islam thus makes it an article of faith to believe in all the earlier prophets, starting with Adam, and continuing with Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, John and Jesus amongst many others (may peace be on them all).

The Most Concise Definition of God:

The most concise definition of God in Islam is given in the four verses of Surah Ikhlas which is Chapter 112 of the Qur'an:

"Say: He is Allah, the One and Only.
"Allah, the Eternal, Absolute.
"He begets not, nor is He begotten.
And there is none like unto Him." [Al-Qur'an 112:1-4]

The word '*Assamad*' is difficult to translate. It means 'absolute existence', which can be attributed only to Allah (swt), all other existence being temporal or conditional. It also means that Allah (swt) is not dependant on any person or thing, but all persons and things are dependant on Him.

Surah Ikhlas - the touchstone of theology:

Surah Ikhlas (Chapter 112) of the Glorious Qur'an, is the touchstone of theology. '*Theo*' in Greek means God and '*logy*' means study. Thus Theology means study of God and to Muslims this four line definition of Almighty God serves as the touchstone of the study of God. Any candidate to divinity must be subjected to this 'acid test'. Since the attributes of Allah given in this chapter are unique, false gods and pretenders to divinity can be easily dismissed using these verses.

What does Islam say about 'god-men'?

India is often called the land of 'god-men'. This is due to the abundance of so-called spiritual masters in India. Many of these 'babas' and 'saints' have a large following in many countries. Islam abhors deification of any human being. To understand the Islamic stand towards such pretenders to divinity, let us analyze one such 'god-man', Osho Rajneesh.

Let us put this candidate, 'Bhagwan' Rajneesh, to the test of Surah Ikhlas, the touchstone of theology:

i) The first criterion is **"Say, He is Allah, one and only"**. Is Rajneesh one and only? No! Rajneesh was one among the multitude of 'spiritual teachers' produced by India. Some disciples of Rajneesh might still hold that Rajneesh is one and only.

ii) The second criterion is, '**Allah is absolute and eternal**'. We know from Rajneesh's biography that he was suffering from diabetes, asthma, and chronic backache. He alleged that

the U.S. Government gave him slow poison in prison. Imagine Almighty God being poisoned! Rajneesh was thus, neither absolute nor eternal.

iii) The third criterion is **'He begets not, nor is He begotten'**. We know that Rajneesh was born in Jabalpur in India and had a mother as well as a father who later became his disciples.

In May 1981 he went to U.S.A. and established a town called 'Rajneeshpuram'. He later fell foul of the West and was finally arrested and asked to leave the country. He came back to India and started a commune in Pune which is now known as the 'Osho' commune. He died in 1990. The followers of Osho Rajneesh believe that he is Almighty God. At the 'Osho commune' in Pune one can find the following epitaph on his tombstone:

"Osho – never born, never died; only visited the planet Earth between 11th December 1931 to 19th January 1990."

They forget to mention that he was not granted visa for 21 countries of the world. Can a person ever imagine 'God' visiting the earth, and requiring a visa to enter a country! The Archbishop of Greece said that if Rajneesh had not been deported, they would have burnt his house and those of his disciples.

(iv) The fourth test, which is the most stringent is, **"There is none like unto Him"**. The moment you can imagine or compare 'God' to anything, then he (the candidate to divinity) is not God. It is not possible to conjure up a mental picture of the One True God. We know that Rajneesh was a human being, having two eyes, two ears, a nose, a mouth and a white flowing beard. Photographs and posters of Rajneesh are available in plenty. The moment you can imagine or draw a mental picture of an entity, then that entity is not God.

Many are tempted to make anthropomorphic comparisons of God. Take for instance, Arnold Schwarzenegger, the famous body builder and Hollywood actor, who won the title of 'Mr. Universe', the strongest man in the world. Let us suppose that someone says that Almighty God is a thousand times stronger than Arnold Schwarzenegger. The moment you can compare any entity to God, whether the comparison is to Schwarzenegger or to King Kong, whether it is a thousand times or a million times stronger, it fails the Qur'anic criterion, "There is none like unto Him".

Thus, the 'acid test' cannot be passed by anyone except the One True God.

The following verse of the Glorious Qur'an conveys a similar message:

"No vision can grasp Him but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, Yet is acquainted with all things." [Al-Qur'an 6:103]

We can keep on talking that today we have come to know that the **plants have got sexes** which we did not know earlier.

QURAN says in

SURAH TAHA C 20 V 53

that the plants got sexes, males and females.

Today we have come to know that there is two types of water, sweet and salty and **there is barrier between them** which is mentioned in the QURAN in

SURAH FURQAN C 25 V 53

and SURAH RAHMAN C 55 V 19 – 20 .

بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَّا يَبْغِيَانِ (١٩) مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ

IT IS ALLAH WHO HAS LET FREE TWO BODIES OF FLOWING WATER. THOUGH THEY MEET THEY DO NOT MIX. THERE IS A BARRIER BETWEEN THEM.

Today's science tell us that **it is the mountains which prevent the earth from shaking** which is mentioning in the **QURAN 1400 years ago**

In the **SURAH NABA C 78 V 6 and 7.**

[78:6] Did we not make the earth habitable?

[78:7] And the mountains stabilizers?

The **QURAN** speaks about **BIOLOGY** that

WE HAVE CREATED EVERY LIVING CREATURES FROM WATER. IN SURAH AMBIA C 21 V 30.

QURAN mention this 1400 years ago.

The **QURAN** speaks about **ZOOLOGY** about the life-span of the spiders in **SURAH ANKABURT C 29 V 41.**

About the ants in **SURAH AL NAMAL C 27 V 17 to 18.**

About the bees in **SURAH NAHL C 16 V 68-69.**

The **QURAN** speaks about **EMBRYOLOGY** in **SURAH ALAQ C 96 V 1-2**

__ We created man from an extract of clay.

Then We made him as a drop in a place of

settlement, firmly fixed. Then We made the

drop into an *alaqah* (leech, suspended thing,

and blood clot), then We made the *alaqah* into

a *mudghah* (chewed substance)... __1 (Qur'an,23:12-14)

which we have come to know recently.

The QURAN speaks about the embryological stages

in SURAH MUMINUM C 23 V 12 TO 14.

You can go on talking about the scientific points there are more than thousands of verses in the QURAN which speaks about science. **After every scientific fact you ask the question, who could have mention that in the QURAN?** The only reply the atheist can give you is **the creator, the cherisher, the manufacturer, the inventor, the producer.**

This creator, this manufacturer, this producer, and this inventor we Muslims call HIM as ALLAH.

That's the reason Francis Bacon, very famous philosopher said 'little knowledge of science takes you away from AL MIGHTY GOD. In-depth knowledge of science makes you a believer in GOD. That's the reason today scientists are not eliminating GOD. The illuminating the models of GOD

'LA I LAHA ILLAL LAH'.

Creator is the Author of the Qur'an

The only logical answer to the question as to who could have mentioned all these scientific facts 1400 years ago before they were discovered, is exactly the same answer initially given by the atheist or any person, to the question who will be the first person who will be able to tell the mechanism of the unknown object. It is the 'CREATOR', the producer, the Manufacturer of the whole universe and its contents. In the English language He is 'God', or more appropriate in the Arabic language, 'ALLAH'.

Qur'an is a Book of Signs and not Science

Let me remind you that the Qur'an is not a book of Science, 'S-C-I-E-N-C-E' but a book of Signs 'S-I-G-N-S' i.e. a book of ayaats. The Qur'an contains more than 6,000 ayaats, i.e. 'signs', out of which more than a thousand speak about Science. I am not trying to prove that the Qur'an is the word of God using scientific knowledge as a yard stick because any yardstick is supposed to be more superior than what is being checked or verified. For us Muslims the Qur'an is the Furqan i.e. criteria to judge right from wrong and the ultimate yardstick which is more superior to scientific knowledge.

But for an educated man who is an atheist, scientific knowledge is the ultimate test which he believes in. We do know that science many a times takes 'U' turns, therefore I have restricted the examples only to scientific facts which have sufficient proof and evidence and not scientific theories based on assumptions. Using the ultimate yardstick of the atheist, I am trying to prove to him that the Qur'an is the word of God and it contains the scientific knowledge which is his yardstick which was discovered recently, while the Qur'an was revealed 1400 year ago. At the end of the discussion, we both come to the same conclusion that God though superior to science, is not incompatible with it.

Science is Eliminating Models of God but not God

Francis Bacon, the famous philosopher, has rightly said that a little knowledge of science makes man an atheist, but an in-depth study of science makes him a believer in God. Scientists today are eliminating models of God, but they are not eliminating God. If you translate this into Arabic, it is La illaha illal la, There is no god, (god with a small 'g' that is fake god) but God (with a capital 'G').

Surah Fussilat:

"Soon We will show them our signs in the (farthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?"

[Al-Quran 41:53]